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LONDON

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## A

True Relation of the cruell Mur-  
 thering of a young Boy, not fully three yeares  
 olde, w<sup>ch</sup> olde Sister likewise had her tongue cut out of  
 her head, hard by the rootes: which murther and massa-  
 cre v. done by a woman called Mother Dell, and her  
 Sonne, dwelling at *Hatfield* in Hartfordsshire, for which monstrous  
 fact, they were both hanged at Hartford this last Sifes. The  
 onely witnesse to proue the Murther was the tongue-  
 les Childe, most mightily preserued from death,  
 to which Childe it pleased God to lend  
 the vse of speech, notwithstanding the want of her  
 tongue.



In Hatfield in the Countie of Hartford,  
 dwelled an olde Widdowe, called Mother  
 Dell, who had abiding with her in the  
 house, onely her Sonne, named T. Dell:  
 Into the house of this old woman (some  
 foure yeares since) was scene goe into two  
 prettie Childzen a Boy and a Girl, the Boy seemed not  
 three yeares of age, and the Girl not much aboue foure.  
 These Childzen were led into the said house by a wadding  
 Pedler & his wife (or Puncke.) The going in of these chil-  
 dzen was noted by diuers, but especiallve by a Tayloz  
 dwelling in the towne called A. C. which Tayloz markt  
 them so much the more, for that they were handsomely ap-  
 parell'd and their coates made with new winges, skirtes  
 and lags, such as he had not scene the like of besore, which

made him presentlie vpon the sight of them, to make a patterne of those wings and Jaggies: But doubting that he had not taken a true patterne, he watched to haue another sight of those Childzen, But when for two or thre daies space hee could not see them, hee went to the house of Mother Dell, and did aske her for those Childzen? She answered him verie shortly saying: they were safe enough, for they were gone againe with them that brought them.

With this answer the Taylor was satisfied, because it no further concerned him then the getting of a peece of a new fashion. But within a while after the boy was found dead in a ditch or water not farre from the Towne, with a great peece of wood tyed to his backe. The Childe being taken out, it did plainly appeare that hee was murdered befoze he was throwne in, The poore harmelesse Infant being found thus cruelly murdered, and none that looked on him taking knowledge of him. His pretty little coate was taken and hanged vp in diuers market townes and proclamation made in euerie one of those Townes to this effect, that if any one whatsoener could and would tel where the Father or Mother of the murdered Childe (which wore that Coate) dwelt, he should haue fortye shillings for his paines, and his charges to come to bring him from and to the place where hee dwelt: But all this proued to little or no purpose, till at the last, this newes came to the hearing of the Taylor, who comming to the place where the Coate was to bee seene, and taking good notice of it, he presently calde to his remembrance, that, that coate was wore by one of those Childzen which hee had seene goe into the house of Mother Dell.

The newes of this comming to the eares of Sir Henry Butler and one other Knight, being both Iustices, and both dwelling neere to that place, a warrant was made, by vertue whereof, the said Mother Dell and her Sonne were brought before them both, and stricly examined, where they both confest y two such Childzen as the Tay-



for spake o<sup>r</sup>, came into the house with a Pedler and his wife, and that they verily thought the Boy at that time had that coate on his backe: but all this was nothing to them, for they neither knew the Pedlar nor his wife, onely they came thether to see if they had needs of any of their ware, (as it is a common vse for traueling Pedlars to cal at diuers houses): when they had bestowed some little money with them, both hee his wife, and those Children (which they saide were theirs) went out on the backside of the house, and what after became of them, they knew not.

Upon this their confession, they were both bound ouer to appeare and answer at the next Assizes, the Justices hoping ere that time to finde out the actor or actors of that moze then monstrous tragedie. But alas their hopes were deceiued, for the time was not yet come wherein God had decreed to bring this cruell, barbarous, and bloody massacre to light: yet notwithstanding, they were still bound ouer from Wife to Wife, almoste for foure yeares, in which time, the saide Mother Dell bestowed greate cost in altering, repaying, and furnishing of her house, which made many of her neighbors much to wonder, for that they knew not from whence shee should haue wherewith to defray that charge.

But now let vs leaue both her and her Sonne to the bel and hazzard of a guiltie conscience, which alwaies waytes and attends on murderers, and let vs now speake of the pooze mangled and dismembred Gille, who was now in farre worse case then her dead Mother, had not hee which prouides for the whole world, in his good appointed tyme prouided for her: For her tongue was first cut out of her head by the rootes, then was shee led by this said Mother of mischief and her Sonne, (at a time when they were not seene) to the side of a wood, which was sildome frequented, in which place stood an old great hollow tree, which was not very high.

Having

Having brought this helpelesse and hopelesse child to this tree (which they ment should be her grave) the sonne got vp to the top, and rudely halled vp after him this harmlesse girle, who having seene her brother murdered befoze her face, had no reason to hope of life, yet did she not cease with teares and signes to begge for pittie of these pittilesse wretches, whose hearts being much harder then stone, would not relent: soz this mercilesse villaine let her slippe into the tree, where they left her, in hope neuer moze to see her, oz heare of her.

But he that preserved Daniel in the Lions den, and made the blinde to see, the lame to goe, and the dumbe to speake, did not onely preserve the life of this childe, but also did giue vnto her an extraordinary strength and vigoz, whereby she was able, and did make such a noyse, that a man comming by that way (not by chaunce, but surlye by the providence and appointment of God) hearing a strange humming, and hollow crying, drawing neare to that tree, perceived the noyse and crie to come from thence, which made him get vp to the top of it, where being and looking downe into it, he behelde that pittifull, ruthfull, and bloody spectacle: which when he had a while looked on with pittie and compassion, and having spoke to her, and perceyving by her signes that she could not answer him, he made meanes to drawe her out. Which when he had done, he began (as may be easily imagined) to bethinke with himselfe, what great trouble hee might come into if hee were found with the childe, he being a stranger, as it seemes he was.

And this feare of trouble (as was supposed by the grave and wise Iudge and Justices of the Bench, when the matter came to their hearing) made this man after he had pulled her out of the tree, to make from her with all the haste he could. But the poore soule pursued him with all the haste she could, crying and calling vnto him for succoz and helpe in the best manner she could, being therevnto urged by

by paine and hunger, the least of which will force a man  
of a resolute and resolute spirit to breake silence, had bee-  
holwed the contrarie: much more then being ioyned both  
together must they force a childe.

In briefe then, when she had lost the sight of him, God  
knowes what became of her, but no one man or woman  
can tell any certaine place of her abode for almost these  
foure yeares.

Many say they haue seene such a dumbe childe wander  
vp and downe a begging, and she herselfe hath confessed  
(since the time that God hath lent her vse of her speech and  
utterance, that she may bee easily vnderstood by any that  
shall heare her) that she did beg for her foode all that time.

Ant questionlesse, the Lord who had reserved her, both  
to bring so monstrous a murder, and cruell a massacre to  
light, and also to make manifest his almightie power to  
many misbelieving and vnbelieving miscreants (Attest it  
I meane) he, I say, as may most evidently appeare, did  
both preserve her, and prouide for her.

And now the time drawing neare, wherein it pleased  
God to glue these wicked wretches some part of of their  
reward, he so directed the course of this poore wandring  
childe, that she came backe againe to the towne of Hat-  
field, where she receiued her in songs, hauing yet no vse  
of speech nor utterance, whereby she might be vnderstood.  
And wandring vp and downe the towne, little thinking  
she had bene neare the place where her innocent brother  
lost his life, and herselfe the instrument of her speech: but  
going along the streete, gasing here and there, as children  
will doe (yea and olde folkes too) when they come into a  
strange place, At last shee came by the house where this  
bloodie tragidie had bene acted: which house she no sooner  
saue, but she knew, as did appeare by the signes of griefe  
and sorrow, which she made at the sight thereof. For what  
with her crying, and the extraoꝛdinarie noyse which shee  
made, shee drew people about her, who did in some sorte  
seeme



seeme to Greene at the moane shee made : but surely they could not chuse but wonder, and desire to knowe what the sorrow and signes ment which the childe made. For one while she would gape wide with her mouth, drawing her fore finger to and fro it, as though she had bene cutting of some thing : then would she with her finger point into the house. And when this mother Dell and her sonne came to the doore, then her crying and her signes did seme much to encrease, which made the lookers on to suspect much, but alas they knew not what. But at last amongst other folkes, came the Toller befoze spoken of, and hee no sooner saw the childe, noted her signes, and remembred the other Childe found in the water and murdered as is aforesaide, but straight he saies, that this was the other of those Children, which was ledde into that house long since by the Pedler and his wife. Then some of the Neighbours together with the Taylor, took the childe and led her into the house, shee being within, stood staring wildely round about her, at last she spied a paire of stayes, to which shee went directlye, and coming to them, shee looked earnestlye on them, looking about the house againe, she first pointed to the stayes, and then to a Corner of the house, as who should say, these stayes did stand there.

This signe the neighbors understood well, because they knew the stayes had bene remooved and that made them thinke some foul matter would bee pickt out of her other signes. Whereupon they beganne to lay handes on the Mother and her Sonne, to haue them againe (now with the Childe) befoze the Justice, at which the childe seemed to reioyce.

Being brought befoze Sir Henry Butler, who was the next Justice, (and had examined them diuers times befoze concerning these Children) the Constable or Headborough beganne to tell vnto his Worshippe the cause of their coming, and hauing related vnto him from point to



to point, what they had seene, the Childe marking, and understanding them well, fell to her former signes againe before the Knight. Whereupon hee did with greaſe wiſdome and diſcretion, examine them aſarte, one from another. But they both remained ſtill obſtinate, and in their olde tale, confeſſing nothing, nor would anye of them acknowledge, that they had ever ſcene the Child before, notwithstanding the Taylor did ſtill aſſerme it to their faces, that that was the Child which the Pedler and his wife led into their houſe long ſince with the boy.

The Juſtice aſſuring himſelfe now, that theſe were the actors of that bloody Tragedy, & hoping that God would in time make it yet more plaine then it was, hee cauſed a Wittimus to be made & ſent them to the Tayle, there to remaine with out hyle or mainepriſe untill the Aſſiſes. And further hee willed the Conſtable to take the Child backe againe with him to the Towne, and to haue a great care that he might be wel looked vnto, and to ſee the houſe of Mother Dell ſafely ſhut vp.

All this being doone according to the Knights commaund, & the childes lodging & diet being much better, then it had beene long beſore, ſhe began to gather both ſtrength and ſpirit vnto her, and to take delight to playe amongſt Childzen.

But now (Gentle Reader) let mee intreate thee as thou reaſteſt, not onely to admyre and wonder, but to prayſe & magnifie the mightie maker and preſeruer of vs all, for his great mercy and might ſhewed to this poore childe, in this next ſucceeding action, which if wee looke into but with the eyes of naturall reaſon and humane ſence, it will be thought incredible and impoſſible. But with God nothing is impoſſible, & this ought not to be thought incredible, becauſe it was ſo lately and ſoncere vnto vs done, and for that the Child is yet liuing in Hatfield to aſſerme for truth, all that is heree wriſſten of her.

Now you shal vnderstand, that this girle being playing  
 with other children on the backe-side of some mans house  
 in the towne, where cocks, hens, & chickens were feeding,  
 It pleased God at that time, to make a cocke to be (as it  
 were a tutor to the child, and) his first messenger of this  
 mightie miracle, like as a bird of the same name and na-  
 ture, vsing the selfe same note, put Peter in minde that hee  
 had denied his maister: from which his remembrance,  
 sprung his true and heartie repentance. But to procede:  
 This child being playing (as I said before) one of the rocks  
 in the yard began to crow, and another answered him and  
 thus they continued a prettie while. At last one of the chil-  
 dzen began (after their maner) to mocke the cockes, cry-  
 ing cocke-adoodle-doo: in the end this dumbe child, stray-  
 ning her selfe, cried as the rest had done, cocke-adoodle-doo,  
 which made all the children amaze: and one of them that  
 stood next her, said: what, canst thou speake now? I that  
 I can (said she) speaking it so plainly that they all vnder-  
 stood her. The hearing of this made the children break  
 vp their play, and runne home with ioy to the house where  
 this child was kept, to carrie newes. And when she came  
 home to the house where she was kept, and the folke of the  
 house finding the report of the children to be true, with ex-  
 ceeding ioy (after the asking of her some few questions, to  
 which she did answer verie directly) they led her againe  
 to the knight before named, to whom they tolde what had  
 happened. Which when he had heard (he being furnished  
 with the feare of God, which is indeede the true fountaine  
 and fountation of wisdom) hee first of all gaue thanks  
 to God, and then he did aske her who cut out her tongue?  
 she said, the olde woman and her sonne, that killed her bro-  
 ther, and put her into the tree: then he asked her who tooke  
 her out of the tree? and she saide, a man, that when hee had  
 done did runne away from her because she could not speake  
 to him. The knight then asked whither she went then? but alas  
 she could not tell him: then he did aske her, who brought  
 her

her to the old womans house first: and she said a man and a woman that had killed her father and her mother, and taken a great bagge of money from them. And she said that the man and woman had giuen a great deale of that money to the olde woman: and that the olde woman did at that time lift vp her hands thrée times, and did sweare thrée times, that she would neuer tell any body who they were. These and many other questions the knight did aske her, to all which she did answer, with moze reason and sense, then is common to one of her age.

So conclude, the Dises being come, an Inditement was preferred against the mother and the sonne, to which inditement they pleaded not guiltie, and put themselves to the ordinarie trial. Whereupon the childe was brought befoze the Bench, and stode vpon the Table betweene the Bench and the Jury. Where after that the foresaid knight had opened some part of this foule offence, the childe was asked diuerse of the former questions: to which she answered as befoze. The taylor likewise was there, who tolde vnto the Jurie what he had seene. When the Jurie was willed to goe togither: but befoze they went, they did looke into the chldes mouth, but could not see so much as the stumpe of a tongue therein. The Jurie staid not long befoze they returned with their verdict guiltie, wherevpon they had sentence of death pronounced against them, and were both hanged at Hartfozt the fourth day of August.

1606.

Thus farre (gentle reader) haue I set down by selfe and truly the maner of this monstrous massacre. And how farre it hath pleased God to reueale some of the Authoꝝ: and soz some secrete purpose best knowne to himselfe, to conceale the rest, which questionlesse shall be made knowne in his good appointed time, when it shall bee most soz his honour and glorie. In the meane time, let me intreat all you which doe reade or heare this ruffall discourse, to meditate (as I doe and will) on the many miseries and mischances man-  
kinde



kind is subiect to, which if you doe, questionlesse you will make lesse ioy at the birth of your children, and lesse sorrow at their death then commonly you doe, and rather seeke (in some sort) to imitate those Heathens, which did sing and daunce at the death of their children, then those Christians which doe mourne and sorrow as men past hope. As for the loue which ordinarily men beare vnto their children, it may moze fitly be called loue to themselves, then to their children. For notwithstanding we all know or ought to know, that no one is truly happy till his end, if he die well, yet many (nay most of vs) doe rather desire to haue our children suruiue vs, then to see them fairely bestowed before vs. Fewer thinking, respecting, or regarding, what may come to them after our death: so our humors be fed in our liues. And if this may not truly be said to be selfe-loue, I know not what is selfe-loue. Therefore let vs all and euery one of vs, referre and put our willes to Gods will, assuring our selues, that all things shall worke together for the best, for them that loue and feare him.

As for the Deeler and his wife, which the child hath confessed to haue robbed and kild her father and mother, they are not yet found out, nor is the place and abode of her too unfortunate Parents yet knowne. But yet all in good time, if it be the will of the Almighty, both the one and the other shall come to light. Amen.

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